

Oyster River Cooperative School Board  
Regular Meeting Minutes

April 5, 2023

DRAFT

**SCHOOL BOARD PRESENT:** Denise Day, Brian Cisneros, Dan Klein, Heather Smith, Matt Bacon, Tom Newkirk, Giana Gelsey

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE:** Paige Burt

**ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT:** Dr. Morse, Suzanne Filippone, Catherine Plourde, Sue Caswell, Rebecca Noe, Jay Richard, Misty Lowe

**STAFF PRESENT:**

**GUEST PRESENT:** Yusi Turell, Al Howland, Maria Barth-Malone

**ABSENT:** David Goldsmith

**I. CALLED TO ORDER at 7:00 PM by Dr. Morse.**

Dr. Morse announced the Oyster River School Board was selected as the 2023 NH School Board of the Year. He acknowledged former board members Yusi Turell, Al Howland, and Maria Barth-Malone who were present in the audience and told them they were a big part of the board's history leading up to today's recognition. Dr. Morse stated that this Board is special in that it can disagree in public and not be disagreeable, and it is a role model to other school districts. He thanked the school board members for their commitment to the students of the district and expressed how proud he is for receiving this honor. Dr. Morse read the official letter of recognition from the Executive Director of the NH School Board Association. In June board members will be honored in a ceremony held in Manchester.

Former chair and board member Maria Beth-Malone stepped up to the podium to express her appreciation.

**ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIR**

- 1. Review ORCSD Policy BBAB – Selection and Duties of Officers**
- 2. Election of Officers**

**Tom Newkirk nominated Denise Day for Chairperson, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein.**

There were no other nominations.

**Motion passed 5-0-2 with Brian Cisneros and Denise Day abstaining and the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Denise Day was elected as the Board's Chairperson.

**Dan Klein nominated Matt Bacon for Vice-Chair, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk.**

**Brian Cisneros nominated Heather Smith for Vice-Chair, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Giana Gelsey.**

There were no other nominations.

Matt stated he'd like to take a more active role in leadership and with the hiring of a new superintendent he'd like to promote consistency and a process that goes smoothly.

Heather stated that concerning board goals and the budget she'd like to provide leadership and felt a representative from policy and budget would be an advantage.

**Denise Day called for a vote for both nominees. The vote for Matt Bacon was 2 and the vote for Heather Smith was 2. Clarification was made that the nominee could vote for themselves. A second round of voting was done with the final vote being for Matt Bacon with 3 votes and the final vote for Heather Smith was 2 votes.**

Matt Bacon was elected as the Board's Vice-Chair.

- 3. Annual Review of "B" Policies**

Per annual requirement, Chair Denise Day reviewed "B" policies for the Board.

**Ia. PUBLIC HEARING for Policy:**

- **BEDH & R – Public Comments at Board meetings Policy & Procedure**

**Tom Newkirk made a motion to open the public hearing on BEDH & R Policy and Procedure, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

No members of the public spoke.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion to close the public hearing at 7:58pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Giana Gelsey made a motion to approve the agenda as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**III. PUBLIC COMMENTS – None provided.**

**IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**Matt Bacon made a motion to approve the March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 Non-Regular Meeting Minutes as written, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein. Motion passed 4-0-3 with Brian Cisneros, Tom Newkirk and Giana Gelsey abstaining and the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**Matt Bacon made a motion to approve the March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Dan Klein.**

Heather Smith provided the following revisions:

On page 2 under Board Announcements in Heather’s comment change “Imagination Destination” to “Destination Imagination.”

On page 5 under School Board Committee Updates in Heather’s comment change “teaches” to “teachers” in the last sentence.

**Motion passed with correction 5-0-2 with Tom Newkirk and Gianna Gelsey abstaining and the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**V. ANNOUNCEMENTS, COMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS**

**A. District**

Misty Lowe of Mast Way made announcements for both elementary schools in David Goldsmith’s absence. On April 13<sup>th</sup> the Moharimet 4<sup>th</sup> graders will perform Alice in Wonderland Jr at 6:30pm in the ORHS auditorium. This is the same night as the Community Dinner at ORHS from 5:30-6:30pm. On April 17<sup>th</sup> the Mast Way 4<sup>th</sup> graders will perform Annie Jr at 6:30pm in the ORHS auditorium. On May 30<sup>th</sup> Mast Way will host its annual Art Show in the hallways of the school from 5:30-7:15pm. STAR and SASS testing will take place at both schools in late May and early June. Principals have been working with Jay Richard to set up middle school transition activities for June. Jay and ORMS counselor Stephanie Kadden will visit with the 4<sup>th</sup> graders on June 1<sup>st</sup> for an informal Q&A session. Parent Night will be on June 6<sup>th</sup> and Step-Up Day at ORMS will be held during the morning of June 9<sup>th</sup>.

Jay Richard of ORMS announced the Destination Imagination team that focused on composting came in 1<sup>st</sup> place and the Mathcounts team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in their competition. Former professional basketball player Chris Herron will provide a presentation on substance abuse and addiction tomorrow in the Recital Hall. The high school sophomore class will also be attending.

Rebecca Noe of ORHS let the Board know that at noon high school students voluntarily participated in a student-led nation-wide walkout to protest gun violence. She fully supported students exercising their civil rights and was proud of the students for speaking eloquently and passionately about the safety of our nation’s schools. The First Robotics team recently won an engineering award at their competition. Quarter 3 ends on April 7<sup>th</sup> and

grades will be posted on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Prom ticket sales will occur during the week of April 17-21<sup>st</sup> at a cost of \$50 per ticket and Prom will be held on May 25<sup>th</sup>. After break, Teacher Appreciation Week will be celebrated May 1<sup>st</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **B. Board**

Heather Smith commented that Tona Brown's concert was a fantastic evening of performance, and all the musicians should feel proud.

Denise Day agreed that Tona Brown's concert was amazing, and she thanked DEIJ Coordinator Rachael Blansett and Strings teacher Andrea von Oeyen for making it possible.

## **VI. DISTRICT REPORTS**

### **A. Assistant Superintendent/Curriculum & Instruction Report(s)**

Suzanne Filippone thanked the K-5 Math Committee for all the behind the scenes' curriculum development and hours spent working.

#### ORMS Communicating Student Learning (Jay Richard)

Principal Jay Richard presented a slideshow to the Board titled "Reporting Student Learning at ORMS." He went over goals, which included increasing consistency, making information easier and more accessible to parents, creating a "report card" snapshot of learning, and providing student-reflection. The middle school shifted to using PowerSchool to report learning, which is the platform used by all the district schools. Physical copies of report cards are now provided to students and parents, and student self-reflections are emailed home to parents.

Feedback from parents show that they favor PowerSchool as a more effective and convenient reporting system and many families indicated that the student self-reflections have been informative. Most parents monitor their student's academic progress through the printed quarterly report cards, some use PowerSchool and fewer use the student self-reflections. Overall, parents feel the reporting provides greater clarity and understanding of competency-based grading and they appreciate the changes that have been made.

Feedback from 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students indicate that all students know how to access their grades in PowerSchool and the majority know how to find teacher feedback and assignments on Schoology. Students are also aware that support is available from their teachers during the Bobcat and Flex times. Like parents, most students use PowerSchool as the preferred method to find out how they are doing in their classes.

Next steps include refining the self-reflection process for greater consistency and effectiveness, providing PowerSchool directions every quarter, and continuing to send home paper copies of the report cards.

Tom Newkirk noted the survey did not pose a basic question of interest to the Board – Does the current reporting system give you a clear sense of your child's progress? In particular, he suggested asking parents if the terms used to indicate student progress, for example "progressing," are clear to them since it's a key area of grading.

Heather Smith appreciated the information provided to parents in the teacher presentations during grade level meetings. She also felt that using PowerSchool was a great improvement.

Giana Gelsey There was some discussion of the low parent/guardian participation rate on the survey and its effect on the results. Giana Gelsey wondered about having parent conferences in addition to progress reports during the second half of the year. Jay explained that all parents are invited to the fall conferences to meet the teams, but logistically adding a spring conference would be a challenge. Dr. Morse further stated a second conference would need to be re-negotiated with the Teacher Guild. Giana asked if there was a way to see the assignments in PowerSchool. Suzanne Filippone explained that PowerSchool and Schoology don't speak to each other and to get further information about an assignment and its rubric you must go into Schoology.

## **B. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Morse shared his pleasure in attending Tona Brown's concert. He acknowledged Andrea von Oeyen's incredible work with students, Gen Brown's communication around the event, and Suzanne Filippone's logistical work to make sure it went well.

### Conval Lawsuit

Dr. Morse provided an update to the Conval Lawsuit stating that NH is obligated to provide an adequate education, however, it is the lowest funded state per student in the country providing approximately \$3,300 per student. Since taxpayers make up the difference in cost, there are several towns that can't financially generate the taxes to adequately provide for education, therefore the state is not meeting its constitutional obligation. A powerful law firm defending the lawsuit argues that the school administration is not experts in public schools. The trial starts on April 10<sup>th</sup> Dr. Morse will be in court to testify, and Suzanne Filippone will fill in during his absence. Dr. Morse said while Oyster River taxpayers can make up the difference in costs, not all towns are that fortunate, and he will be present to show his support.

### Calendar – May 26 Workshop

Since there were more snow days than anticipated, Dr. Morse recommended turning the May 26<sup>th</sup> Workshop Day into a regular school day.

**Tom Newkirk made a motion for the May 26<sup>th</sup> Teacher Workshop Day to be a regular school day, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Brian Cisneros. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

Dr. Morse asked the Board to consider making June 16<sup>th</sup> ½ day the last day of school. For staff, June 19<sup>th</sup> is a holiday and June 20-24<sup>th</sup> would be four Workshop Days with one additional PD Day to still be determined.

Board members discussed that late June gets hot and there is not a lot of new learning occurring in any additional days. The Board felt comfortable making the decision tonight. Denise Day recommended having future conversations about how snow days are built in and communicated through the calendar. Heather Smith suggested they look into how to make a calendar with a finalized last day that does not change.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion for Friday, June 16<sup>th</sup> ½ day to be the last day of the school, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

### School Board News

Dr. Morse recognized Michael Williams's "Board News" that he provided for the school newsletters in an effort to improve communication. He asked for a board member to continue the endeavor and Matt Bacon volunteered. If Matt is absent, Tom Newkirk will fill in.

## **C. Business Administrator**

### MS22

Sue Caswell requested board approval and signed consent for the 2023 MS22 form.

**Brian Cisneros made a motion for the Board to accept the 2023 MS22 form with signed consent, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

### Tennis Court Access

Sue Caswell presented a Tennis Court Usage Plan for public use and rental space. The plan includes securing the gate with a coded lock to allow authorized code holders access to the courts. A sign at the courts would provide contact information to obtain a code with a one-time \$25 fee. Code holders would then be able to use the courts free of charge when they are not being used by the district or reserved for outside organizations. For group use, a \$300 fee would be applied for a half day rental by profit organizations and a \$150 fee for nonprofit groups.

Board members held a discussion about the security and safety of the tennis courts, the one-time code fee charge, and the rental costs proposed. The board decided to move forward with the group rental rates and continue discussing details for individual use.

**Dan Klein made a motion to adopt the fee schedule as proposed for groups only, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### **D. Student Representative Report**

Paige Burt applauded MOR for putting on a fun 2-hour Coffee House evening for students. She was glad to see a large student attendance at Tona Brown's panel held during the school day and felt the evening performance was remarkable. She encouraged the listening audience to participate in the April 15<sup>th</sup> Mattress Fundraiser to help support the Senior Class, Project Graduation, and Girls Lacrosse. The April 13<sup>th</sup> Community Dinner will include table information from local groups. Cost is \$8 per person or \$20 per family. [Click here to RSVP.](#)

**E. Finance Committee Report** – None provided.

**F. Other** – None provided.

**VII. UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGENDA –Denise Day asked if any items needed to be discussed separately and the Board had no concerns.**

- Nominate and approve Non-Continuing Contract Professional Staff Members as submitted by the Superintendent.
- Nominate Mast Way Art Teacher.
- List of Policies for a second read/adoption: BEDH & R – Public Comments at Board Meetings Policy and Procedure, Policy JJJ – Access to Public School Programs by Non-Public, Charter Schools and Home Education Pupils.

**Denise Day made a motion to approve the Unanimous Consent Agenda, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heather Smith. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

#### **VIII. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS**

Committee Assignment Requests: What is the committee and what does it do?

Dr. Morse asked board members to submit their assignment requests to Wendy DiFruscio by Wed., April 12<sup>th</sup>.

#### **IX. SCHOOL BOARD COMMITTEE UPDATES**

The Manifest Committee met and completed the following manifests.

Payroll Manifest #20 Total is \$1,034,533.13

Vendor Manifest #20 Total is \$1,083,157.82

Heather Smith announced the following updates for Sustainability Committee: Composting bins are in the team spaces at ORMS, Team leaders began the first of their faculty meeting presentations, and April 13<sup>th</sup> is the Community Dinner of burgers and hot dogs, which will feature table information from various student and town organizations. Students are also gearing up for Earth Week by developing fun programming and activities to promote school-wide sustainability. More info. to come.

Denise Day announced Wellness Committee meets on the 6<sup>th</sup> and Policy Committee meets on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

**X. PUBLIC COMMENTS** – None provided.

#### **XI. CLOSING ACTIONS**

**A. Future Meeting Dates:** April 19, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM MS Recital Hall  
May 3, 2023 – Regular School Board Meeting @ 7:00 PM Moharimet School

**XII. NON-PUBLIC SESSION: RSA 91-A:3 II {If Needed}**

**NON-MEETING SESSION: RSA 91-A2 I {If Needed}**

**XIII. ADJOURNMENT:**

**Heather Smith made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:55pm, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tom Newkirk. Motion passed 7-0 with the student representative voting in the affirmative.**

**The School Board reserves the right to take action on any item on the agenda.**

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karyn Laird, Records Keeper